TWO SERMONS

PREACHED BEFORE THE

TWENTY-EIGHTH CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY

IN BOSTON,

On the 14th and 21st of November, 1852,

ON LEAVING THEIR OLD AND ENTERING A NEW PLACE OF WORSHIP.

BY THEODORE PARKER,

MINISTER OF THAT SOCIETY.

PHONOGRAPHICALLY REPORTED BY RUFUS LEIGHTON.

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SERMON I.

SOME ACCOUNT OF MY MINISTRY.

ACTS XX. 27. — "I HAVE NOT SHUNNED TO DECLARE UNTO YOU ALL THE COUNSEL OF GOD."

ON the twenty-second of January, 1845, at a meeting of gentlemen in Boston, which some of you very well remember, it was "*Resolved*, that the Rev. Theodore Parker shall have a chance to be heard in Boston."

That resolution has been abundantly backed up by action; and I have had "a chance to be heard." And that is not all: I have had a long and patient and most faithful and abundant hearing. No man in the last eight years in New England has had so much. I mean to say, no minister in New England has done so much preaching, or had so much hearing. This is the result of your resolution, and your attempts to make your thought a thing.

As this seems likely to be the last time I shall stand within these walls, it is not improper that I should give some little account of my stewardship whilst here; and therefore you will pardon me if I speak considerably of myself, — a subject which has been before you a long time, very much in your eye, and I think also very much in your heart.

I must, in advance, ask your indulgence for the character of this sermon. I have but just returned from an expe-

dition to Ohio, to lecture and to preach; whither I went weary and not well, and whence I have returned still more weary and no better. It is scarcely more than twenty-four hours since I came back, and accordingly but a very brief time has been allowed me for the composition of this sermon. For its manner and its matter, its substance and its form, therefore, I must ask your indulgence.

When I spoke to you for the first time on that dark, rainy Sunday, on the 16th of February, 1845, I had recently returned from Europe. I had enjoyed a whole year of leisure: it was the first and last I have ever had. I had employed that time in studying the people and institutions of Western Europe; their social, academical, political, and ecclesiastical institutions. And that leisure gave me an opportunity to pause, and review my scheme of philosophy and theology; to compare my own system with that of eminent men, as well living as dead, in all parts of Europe, and see how that scheme would fit the wants of Christendom, Protestant and Catholic. It was a very fortunate thing that at the age of three and thirty I was enabled to pause, and study myself anew; to re-examine what I had left behind me, and recast my plans for what of life might yet remain.

You remember, when you first asked me to come here and preach, I doubted and hesitated, and at first said, No; for I distrusted my own ability to make my idea welcome at that time to any large body of men. In the country I had a small parish, very dear to me still, wherein I knew every man, woman, and child, and was well known to them: I knew the thoughts of such as had the habit of thinking. Some of them accepted my conclusions because they had entertained ideas like them before I did, perhaps before I was born. Others tolerated the doctrine because they liked the

man and the doctrine seemed part of him, and, if they took my ideas at all, took them for my sake. You, who knew little of me, must know the doctrine before you could know the man; and, as you would know the doctrine only as I had power to set it forth in speech, I doubted if I should make it welcome. I had no doubt of the truth of my idea; none of its ultimate triumph. I felt certain that one day it would be "a flame in all men's hearts." I doubted only of its immediate success in my hands.

Some of you had not a very clear notion of my programme of principles. Most of you knew this, — that a strong effort was making to exclude me from the pulpits of New England; not on account of any charge brought against my character, but simply on account of the ideas which I presented; ideas which, as I claimed, were bottomed on the nature of man and the nature of God: my opponents claimed that they were not bottomed on the Bible. You thought that my doctrine was not fairly and scientifically met; that an attempt was making, not to put it down by reason, but to howl it down by force of ecclesiastical shouting; and that was true. And so you passed a resolve that Mr. Parker should have "a chance to be heard in Boston," because he had not a chance to be heard anywhere else, in a pulpit, except in the little village of West Roxbury.

It was a great principle, certainly, which was at stake; the great Protestant principle of free Individuality of Thought in Matters of Religion. And that, with most of you, was stronger than a belief in my peculiar opinions; far stronger than any personal fondness for me. Therefore your resolution was bottomed on a great idea.

My scheme of theology is very briefly told. There are three great doctrines in it, relating to the Idea of God, the

Idea of Man, and of the Connection or Relation between God and Man.

First, of the Idea of God. I have taught the Infinite Perfection of God; that in God there are united all conceivable perfections, — the perfection of being, which is self-existence; the perfection of power, almightiness; the perfection of wisdom, all-knowingness; the perfection of conscience, all-righteousness; the perfection of the affections, all-lovingness; and the perfection of soul, all-holiness; — that He is perfect Cause of all that He creates, making every thing of perfect material, from a perfect motive, for a perfect purpose, as a perfect means; — that He is perfect Providence also, and has arranged all things in his creation so that no ultimate and absolute evil shall befall any thing that he has made; — that, in the material world, all is order without freedom, for a perfect end; and in the human world, the contingent forces of human freedom are perfectly known by God at the moment of creation, and so balanced together that they shall work out a perfect blessedness for each and for all his children.

That is my idea of God, and it is the foundation of all my preaching. It is the one idea in which I differ from the antichristian sects, and from every Christian sect. I know of no Christian or antichristian sect which really believes in the infinite God. If the infinity of God appears in their synthetic definition of Deity, it is straightway brought to nothing in their analytic description of the divine character, and their historic account of his works and purposes.

Then, of the Idea of Man. I have taught that God gave mankind powers perfectly adapted to the purpose of God; — that the body was just what God meant it to be; had nothing redundant, to be cut off sacramentally; was not deficient in any thing, to be sacramentally agglutinated there-

unto; — and that the spirit of man was exactly such a spirit as the good God meant to make; redundant in nothing, deficient in nothing; requiring no sacramental amputation of an old faculty, no sacramental imputation of a new faculty from another tree; — that the mind and conscience and heart and soul were exactly adequate to the function that God meant for them all; that they found their appropriate objects of satisfaction in the world; and as there was food for the body, — all nature ready to serve it on due condition, — so there was satisfaction for the spirit, truth and beauty for the intellect, justice for the conscience; human beings — lover and maid, husband and wife, kith and kin, friend and friend, parent and child — for the affections; and God for the soul; — that man can as naturally find satisfaction for his soul, which hungers after the infinite God, as for his heart, which hungers for a human friend, or for his mouth, which hungers for daily bread; — that mankind no more needs to receive a miraculous revelation of things pertaining to religion than of things pertaining to housekeeping, agriculture, or manufactures; for God made the religious faculty as adequate to its function as the practical faculties for theirs.

In the development of man's faculties, I have taught that there has been a great progress of mankind, — outwardly shown in the increased power over nature, in the increase of comfort, art, science, literature; and this progress is just as obvious in religion as in agriculture or in housekeeping. The progress in the idea of God is as remarkable as the progress in building ships; for, indeed, the difference between the popular conception of a jealous and angry God, who said his first word in the Old Testament, and his last word in the New Testament, and who will never speak again till "the last day," and then only damn to everlasting ruin the bulk of mankind, — the difference between that conception aud the idea of the Infinite God is as great as

the difference between the "dug-out" of a Sandwich Islander and a California clipper, that takes all the airs of heaven in its broad arms, and skims over the waters with the speed of wind. I see no limit to this power of progressive development in man; none to man's power of religious development. The progress did not begin with Moses, nor end with Jesus. Neither of these great benefactors was a finality in benefaction. This power of growth, which belongs to human nature, is only definite in the historical forms already produced, but quite indefinite and boundless in its capabilities of future expansion.

In the human faculties, this is the order of rank: I have put the body and all its powers at the bottom of the scale; and then, of the spiritual powers, I put the intellect the lowest of all; conscience came next higher; the affections higher yet; and, highest of all, I have put the religious faculty. Hence I have always taught that the religious faculty was the natural ruler in all this commonwealth of man; yet I would not have it a tyrant, to deprive the mind or the conscience or the affections of their natural rights. But the importance of religion, and its commanding power in every relation of life, that is what I have continually preached; and some of you will remember that the first sermon I addressed to you was on this theme, — The Absolute Necessity of Religion for safely conducting the life of the individual and the life of the state. I dwelt on both of these points, — religion for the individual, and religion for the state. You know very well I did not begin too soon. Yet I did not then foresee that it would soon be denied in America, in Boston, that there was any law higher than an Act of Congress.

Woman I have always regarded as the equal of man, — more nicely speaking, the equivalent of man; superior in some things, inferior in some other: inferior in the lower qualities, in bulk of body and bulk of brain; superior in the

higher and nicer qualities, in the moral power of conscience, the loving power of affection, the religious power of the soul; equal, on the whole, and of course entitled to just the same rights as man; to the same rights of mind, body, and estate; the same domestic, social, ecclesiastical, and political rights as man, and only kept from the enjoyment of these by might, not right; yet herself destined one day to acquire them all. For, as in the development of man, the lower faculties come out and blossom first, and as accordingly, in the development of society, those persons who represent the lower powers first get elevated to prominence; so man, while he is wanting in the superior quality, possesses brute strength and brute intellect, and in virtue thereof has had the sway in the world. But as the finer qualities come later, and the persons who represent those finer qualities come later into prominence; so womankind is destined one day to come forth and introduce a better element into the family, society, politics, and church, and to bless us far more than the highest of men are yet aware. Out of that mine the fine gold is to be brought which shall sanctify the church, and save the state.

That is my idea of man; and you see how widely it differs from the popular ecclesiastical idea of man.

Then a word for the Idea of the Relation between God and Man.

I. First, of this on God's part. God is perfect Cause and perfect Providence, Father and Mother of all men; and He loves each with all of his Being, all of his almightiness, his all-knowingness, all-righteousness, all-lovingness, and all-holiness. He knew at the beginning all the history of mankind, and of each man, — of Jesus of Nazareth and Judas Iscariot; and prepared for all, so that a perfect result shall be worked out at last for each soul. The means for the purposes of God in the human world are the natural powers of

man, his faculties; those faculties which are fettered by instinct, and those also which are winged by free-will. Hence while, with my idea of God, I am sure of the end, and have asked of all men an infinite faith that the result would be brought out right by the forces of God, — with my idea of man, I have also pointed out the human means; and, while I was sure of the end, and called for divine faith, I have also been sure of the means, and called for human work. Here are two propositions: first, that God so orders things in his providence, that a perfect result shall be wrought out for each; and, second, that He gives a certain amount of freedom to every man. I believe both of these propositions; I have presented both as strongly as I could. I do not mean to say that I have logically reconciled these two propositions, with all their consequences, in my own mind, and still less to the minds of others. There may seem to be a contradiction. Perhaps I do not know how to reconcile the seeming contradiction, and yet believe both propositions.

From this it follows that the history of the world is no surprise to God; that the vice of a Judas, or the virtue of a Jesus, is not a surprise to Him. Error and sin are what stumbling is to the child; accidents of development, which will in due time be overcome. As the finite mother does not hate the sound and strong boy, who sometimes stumbles in learning to walk; does not hate the sound, but weak boy, who stumbles often; and does not hate the crippled boy, who stumbles continually, and only stumbles; — but as she seeks to help and teach all three, so the Infinite Mother of us all does not hate the well-born, who seldom errs; does not hate the ill-born, who often transgresses; and does not hate the moral idiot, even the person that is born organized for kidnapping; — but will, in the long run of eternity, bring all these safely home, — the first murderer and the last kidnapper, both reformed and blessed. Suffering for error and sin is a fact in this world. I make

no doubt it will be a fact in all stages of development in the next world. But mark this: It is not from the anger or weakness of God that we suffer; it is for purposes worthy of his perfection and his love. Suffering is not a devil's malice, but God's medicine. I can never believe that Evil is a finality with God.

II. Then see the relation on man's part. Providence is what God owes to man; and man has an unalienable right to the infinite providence of God. No sin ever can alienate and nullify that right. To say that it could, would seem to me blasphemy against the Most High God; for it would imply a lack of some element of perfection on God's part; a lack of power, of wisdom, of justice, of love, or of holiness, — fidelity to Himself. It would make God finite, and not infinite.

Religion is what man owes to God, as God owes providence to man. And with me religion is something exceedingly wide, covering the whole surface, and including the whole depth of human life. The internal part I have called Piety. By that I mean, speaking synthetically, the love of God as God, with all the mind and conscience, heart and soul; speaking analytically, the love of truth and beauty, with the intellect; the love of justice, with the conscience; the love of persons, with the affections; the love of holiness, with the soul: for all these faculties find in God their perfect Object, — the all-true, all-beautiful, all-just, all-loving, and all-holy God, the Father and Mother of all.

The more external part of religion, I have called Morality; that is, keeping all the natural laws which God has writ for the body and spirit, for mind and conscience and heart and soul; and I consider that it is just as much a part of religion to keep every law which God has writ in our frame, as it is to keep the "Ten Commandments;" and just as much our duty to keep the law which He has thus

published in human nature, as if the voice of God spoke out of heaven, and said, "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not." Man's consciousness proclaims God's law. It is nature on which I have endeavored to bottom my teachings. Of course this morality includes the subordination of the body to the spirit, and, in the spirit, the subordination of the lower faculties to the higher; so that the religious element shall correct the partiality of affection, the coldness of justice, and the shortsightedness of intellectual calculation; and, still more, shall rule and keep in rank the appetites of the body. But in this the soul must not be a tyrant over the body; for, as there is a holy spirit, there is likewise a holy flesh. All its natural appetites are sacred; and the religious faculty is not to domineer over the mind, nor over the conscience, nor over the affections of man. All these powers are to be coördinated into one great harmony, where the parts are not sacrificed to the whole, nor the whole to any one part. So, in short, man's religious duty is to serve God by the normal use, development, and enjoyment of every limb of the body, every faculty of the spirit, every particle of power which we progressively acquire and possess over matter or over man.

The ordinances of that religion are, inwardly, prayer of penitence and aspiration, the joy and delight in God and his gifts; and, outwardly, they are the daily works of life, by fire-side and street-side and field-side, — "the charities that soothe and heal and bless." These are the ordinances, and I know no other.

Of course, to determine the religiousness of a man, the question is not merely — What does he believe? but — Has he been faithful to himself in coming to his belief? It may be possible that a man comes to the conviction of Atheism, but yet has been faithful to himself. It may be that the man believes the highest words taught by Jesus, and yet has been faithless to himself. It is a fact which

deserves to be held up everlastingly before men, that religion begins in faithfulness to yourself. I have known men whom the world called Infidels, and mocked at, who yet were faithful among the faithfulest. Their intellectual conclusions I would have trodden under my feet; but their faithfulness I would fall on my knees to do honor to.

Then the question is not how a man dies, but how he lives. It is very easy for a dying man to be opiated by the doctor and minister to such a degree that his mouth shall utter any thing you will; and then, though he was the most hardened of wretches, you shall say "he died a saint"! The common notion of the value of a little snivelling and whimpering on a death-bed is too dangerous, as well as too poor, to be taught for science in the midst of the nineteenth century.

I have taken it for granted also, that religion gave to men the highest, dearest, and deepest of all enjoyments and delights; that it beautified every relation in human life, and shed the light of heaven into the very humblest house, into the lowliest heart, and cheered and soothed and blessed the very hardest lot and the most cruel fate in mortal life. This is not only my word, but your hearts bear witness to the truth of that teaching; and all human history will tell the same thing.

These have been the chief doctrines that I have set forth in a thousand forms. You see at once how very widely this differs from the common scheme of theology in which all of us were born and bred. There is a vast difference in the Idea of God, of Man, and of the Relation between the two.

Of course I do not believe in a devil, eternal torment, nor in a particle of absolute evil in God's world or in God. I do not believe there ever was a miracle, or ever will be:

everywhere I find law, — the constant mode of operation of the infinite God. I do not believe in the miraculous inspiration of the Old Testament or the New Testament. I do not believe that the Old Testament was God's first word, nor the New Testament his last. The Scriptures are no finality to me. Inspiration is a perpetual fact. Prophets and Apostles did not monopolize the Father: He inspires men to-day as much as heretofore. In nature, also, God speaks for ever. Are not these flowers new words of God? Are not the fossils underneath our feet, hundreds of miles thick, old words of God, spoken millions of millions of years before Moses began to be?

I do not believe the miraculous origin of the Hebrew Church, or the Buddhist Church, or the Christian Church; nor the miraculous character of Jesus. I take not the Bible for my master, nor yet the church; nor even Jesus of Nazareth for my master. I feel not at all bound to believe what the church says is true, nor what any writer in the Old or New Testament declares true; and I am ready to believe that Jesus taught, as I think, eternal torment, the existence of a devil, and that he himself should ere long come back in the clouds of heaven. I do not accept these things on his authority. I try all things by the human faculties; intellectual things by the intellect, moral things by the conscience, affectional things by the affections, and religious things by the soul. Has God given us any thing better than our nature? How can we serve Him and his purposes but by its normal use?

But, at the same time, I reverence the Christian Church for the great good it has done for mankind; I reverence the Mahometan Church for the good it has done, — a far less good. I reverence the Scriptures for every word of truth they teach; and they are crowded with truth and beauty, from end to end. Above all men do I bow my face before that august personage, Jesus of Nazareth, who seems to

have had the strength of man and the softness of woman, — man's mighty, wide-grasping, reasoning, calculating, and poetic mind; and woman's conscience, woman's heart, and woman's faith in God. He is my best historic ideal of human greatness; not without errors, not without the stain of his times, and, I presume, of course not without sins; for men without sins exist in the dreams of girls, not in real fact: you never saw such a one, nor I, and we never shall. But Jesus of Nazareth is my best historic ideal of a religious man, and revolutionizes the vulgar conception of human greatness. What are your Cæsars, Alexanders, Cromwells, Napoleons, Bacons, and Leibnitz and Kant and Shakspeare and Milton even, — men of immense brain and will, — what are they all to this person of large and delicate intellect, of a great conscience, and heart and soul far mightier yet?

With such ideas of man, of God, and of the relation between them, how all things must look from my point of view! I cannot praise a man because he is rich. While I deplore the vulgar rage for wealth, and warn men against the popular lust of gold, which makes money the tri-une deity of so many men, I yet see the function of riches, and have probably preached in favor of national and individual accumulation thereof more than any other man in all New England, for I see the necessity of a material basis for the spiritual development of man; but I never honor a live man because he is rich, and should not think of ascribing to a dead one all the Christian virtues because he died with a large estate, and his faith, hope, and charity were only faith in money, hope for money, and love of money. I should not think such a man entitled to the praise of all the Christian virtues.

And again, I should never praise or honor a man simply because he had a great office, nor because he had the praise

of men; nor should I praise and honor a man because he had the greatest intellect in the world, and the widest culture of that intellect. I should take the intellect for what it was worth; but I should honor the just conscience of a man that carried a hod up the tallest ladder in Boston; I should honor the loving heart of a girl that went without her dinner to feed a poor boy; the faith in God which made a poor woman faithful to every daily duty, while poverty and sickness stared her in the face, and a drunken husband smote her in the heart, — a faith which conquered despair, and still kept living on. I should honor any one of these things more than the intellect of Cæsar and Bacon and Hannibal all united into one: and you see why; because I put intellect at the bottom of the scale, and these higher faculties at the other end.

I put small value on the common "signs of religion." Church-going is not morality: it is compliance with common custom. It may be grievous self-denial, and often is. Reading the Bible daily or weekly is not piety: it may help to it. The "sacraments" are no signs of religion to me: they are dispensations of water, of wine, of bread, and no more. I do not think a few hours of crying on a sick-bed proves that a notorious miser or voluptuary, a hard, worldly fellow, for fifty years, has been a saint all that time, any more than one mild day in March proves that there was no ice in Labrador all winter.

With such views, you see in what esteem I must be held by society, church, and state. I cannot be otherwise than hated. This is the necessity of my position, — that I must be hated; and, accordingly, I believe there is no living man in America that is so widely, abundantly, and deeply hated as I have been, and still continue to be. In the last twelve years, I fear there has been more ecclesiastical

preaching in the United States against me than against war and slavery. Those that hate any particular set of reformers hate me because I am with that particular set, with each and with all. I do not blame men for this; not so much as some others have done on my account. I pity very much more than I blame; not with the pity of contempt, I hope, but with the pity of appreciation, and with the pity of love. I see in the circumstances of men very much to palliate the offences of their character; and I long ago learned not to hate men who hated me. It was not hard to learn; I began early, — I had a mother who taught me.

You know the actual condition of the American Church, that it has a theology which cannot stand the test of reason; and accordingly it very wisely resolved to throw reason overboard before it began its voyage. You know that all Christendom, with a small exception, professes a belief in the devil, in eternal torment; and, of course, all Christendom, with scarce any exception, professes a belief in a God who has those qualities which created a devil and eternal torment.

You know the morality of the American Church. The clergy are a body of kindly and charitable men. Some virtues, which are not very easy to possess, they have in advance of any other class of men amongst us. They are the virtues which belong to their position. I believe they are all, as a body, a good deal better than their creed. I know men often say a man is not so good as his creed. I never knew a minister who was half so bad as Calvinism. I surely have no prejudice against John Calvin, when I say he was an uncommonly hard man, with a great head and a rigorous conscience; but John Calvin himself was a great deal better than the Calvinistic idea of God. I should give up in despair with that idea of God: I should not cast myself on his mercy, for there would be no mercy in Him.

But the preaching of the churches is not adapted to produce the higher kinds of morality. Certain humble but needful forms of morality the church helps, and very much indeed. On the whole, it blocks the wheels of society backwards, so that society does not run down hill; but, on the other hand, it blocks them forward, so that it is harder to get up; and, while you must run over the church to get far down hill, you must also run over it to get up. It favors certain lower things of morality: higher things it hinders.

Here are two great forms of vice, — natural forms. One comes from the period of passion; and, when it is fully ripe, it is the vice of the Debauchee: the other comes from the period of calculation; and, when it is fully rotten, it is the sin of the Hunker.* Now, the churches are not very severe on the first kind of vice. They are very severe on unpopular degrees of it, not on the popular degree. They do service, however, in checking the unpopular degree. But the sin of the Hunkers, I think, the churches uniformly uphold and support. The popular sins of calculation are pretty sure to get the support of the pulpit on their side. Why so? They can pay for it in money and in praise. I know but few exceptions to that rule.

Then there are certain other merely ecclesiastical vices, mere conventional vices; not sins, not transgressions of any natural law. These the churches regard as great sins. Such are doubt and disbelief of ecclesiastical doctrine; neglect of ecclesiastical ordinances, — of the "Sabbath-day," as it is called; neglect of the great bodily sacrament, church-going, and the like. All these offences the churches preach against with great power.

Accordingly the churches hinder the highest morality, favor the lower. The highest morality is thought superflu-

* I do not use this word in its political sense, but to denote a man thoroughly selfish on calculation.

ous in society, contemptible in politics, and an abomination in the church.

Just now, I learned through the newspapers that John Wesley's pulpit has been brought to America, and it is thought a great gain. But if John Wesley's voice, declaring aloud that slavery is "the sum of all villanies," were to be brought, it would presently be excommunicated from the Methodist Church. I understand that the chair in which the "Shepherd of Salisbury Plains" once sat has likewise arrived in America; and the tub, I think it is, which belonged to the "Dairyman's Daughter," has also immigrated; and these will be thought much more valuable ecclesiastical furniture than the piety of the Shepherd of Salisbury Plains, and the self-denial of the Dairyman's Daughter. It is popular to baptize babies in water from the Jordan; unpopular to baptize men with the spirit of Jesus, and with fire from the Holy Ghost.

My preaching has been mainly positive, of truth and duty in their application to life; but sometimes negative and critical, even militant. This was unavoidable; for I must show how my scheme would work when brought face to face with the church, society, and the state.

So I have sometimes preached against the evil doctrines of the Popular Theology; its false idea of God, of man, and of religion. This popular theology contains many excellent things: but its false things, taken as a whole, are the greatest curse of the nation; a greater curse than drunkenness, than the corruption of political parties, greater than slavery. False theology stands in the way of every reform. Would you reform the criminal, — along comes theology, with its "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Would you reform the church, — men say, "You must listen to the church, but not reform it; it must

reform you, and not you it." Would you elevate woman to her rights, — popular theology quotes St. Paul till you are almost sick of his name. Would you refuse obedience to a wicked law, and quote Jesus, and every great martyr from the beginning of the world, — popular theology meets you with "Whoso resisteth the powers that be, resisteth the ordinance of God." If you wish to abolish slavery, — ministers come out with the old story of Ham and Noah, and justify American bondage on an old mythology, writ three thousand years ago, nobody knows where, nobody knows by whom, nobody knows for what purpose. All the garments possessed by the children of Shem and Japheth are too scant to hide the shame of the popular theology. This false theology at this day bears the same relation to human progress, that Heathenism and Judaism bore in the first and second and third and fourth centuries after Christ. I confess, that, while I respect the clergy as much as any class of men, I hate the false ideas of the popular theology, and hate them with my body and with my spirit, with my mind and my conscience, with my heart and my soul; and I hate nothing so bad as I hate the false ideas of the popular theology. They are the greatest curse of this nation.

Then I have preached against Slavery; and to me slavery appears in two views. First, it is a Measure to be looked on as a part of the national housekeeping. We are to ask if it will pay; what its effect will be on the material earnings of the nation. And when we propose to extend slavery to a new territory, this is the question: Will you have slavery, and your land worth five dollars an acre, as in South Carolina; or will you have freedom, and your land worth thirty dollars an acre, as in Massachusetts? Will you have slavery, and the average earnings of all the people one dollar a week; or freedom, and the average earnings four dollars a week? Will you have slavery, and the worst cultivated lands, the rudest houses, and the

poorest towns; or will you have freedom, and the nicest agriculture, the best manufactures, the richest houses, and the most sumptuous towns? Looking at it barely as a part of housekeeping, if I were a monarch, I should not like to say to California, Texas, and New Mexico: "You might have institutions that would make your land worth thirty dollars an acre, and enable your people to earn four dollars a week; but you shall have institutions that will make your land worth five dollars an acre, and the average earnings of the people one dollar a week." I like money too well to take off three dollars from every four that might be earned, and twenty-five dollars from every acre of land worth thirty. I should think twice, if I were the President of the United States, before I did any thing to bring about that result.

That is not all. Slavery is a Principle, to be looked on as a part of our national religion: for our actions are our worship of God, if pious; of the "devil," if impious. It is to be estimated by its conformity to natural law. From my point of view, it is against all natural right, all natural religion, and is, as John Wesley said, "the sum of all villanies." When the question comes up, Shall we introduce slavery into a new territory? this is the question to be asked, Shall the laboring population be reduced to the legal rank of cattle; bought, bred, branded, as cattle? Shall the husband have no right to his wife's society? Shall the maiden have no protection for her own virtue? Shall the wife be torn from her husband? Shall a mother be forced to cut the throats of four of her children, or else see them sold into slavery? — a case that has actually happened. If I were a monarch, I should not like to levy such a tax on any people under my dominion. If I were President of the United States, I should not like to say to California, New Mexico, or old Mexico, "I intend to reduce you to that position;" and I think if I did, and stood up before

you afterwards, you would have something to say about it. I should not like to do this for the sake of being President of the United States.

Now, I must confess that I hate slavery; and I do not hate it any the less since it has become so popular in Boston, and, after a belief in the finality of the Compromise Measures, has been made the *sine qua non* of a man's social, political, and ecclesiastical respectability. I hated it always, and hate it all the worse to-day for what it has done.

Then I have preached against Oppression in every form: the tyranny of man over woman; of popular opinion over the individual reason, conscience, and soul. I have preached against the tyranny of public law, when the law was wicked. Standing in a pulpit, preaching in the name of God, could I call on you to blaspheme the name of God for the sake of obeying a wicked statute that men had made? When I do that, may my right arm drop from my shoulder, and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth! I have preached against the tyranny which takes advantage of men's misfortunes, and with the sponge of illegal usury sucks up the earnings of honest men; against the tyranny of the few over the many in Europe, and of the many over the few in America. I love freedom of thought and of action; and I claim for every man the right to think, not as I do, but as he must or may.

Then I have preached against Intemperance, against making rum, selling rum, and drinking rum. The evil of intemperance has been under my eyes every Sunday. There is not a man before me, not a woman before me, not a girl or boy before me, but has lost some dear and valued relative, within not many years, slain by this monster, which poisons the body of America. The poor men that I feed have been made paupers by rum; of the funerals that I attend, rum, with its harsh hammer, has often nailed down the coffin-lid; and, of the marriages that I

have helped to solemnize, how often has the wife been left worse than a widow! Since intemperance has become so popular in Boston; since it has got the mayor and aldermen on its side, and while every thirty-fifth voter in Boston is a licensed seller of rum; when it is invested with such strength, and gets possession of the House of Representatives, — I have preached against it all the more. I know, from the little town where I was born, as well as this large one, what a curse and blight drunkenness is.

Then I have preached against War; and I suppose, before long, I shall have a new occasion to lift up my voice against it once more.

Now, with such ideas, and such a style of preaching, I could not be popular. Hated I must needs be. How could it be otherwise? Men that knew no God but a jealous God; no human nature but total depravity; no religion but the ordinances of baptism, the Lord's Supper, and reverence for ancient words of holy men, and the like; no truth but public opinion; no justice but public law; no earthly good above respectability, — they must needs hate me, and I do not wonder at it. I fear there is not a theological newspaper in the land that has not delivered its shot in my face. You know how the pulpits, at various times, have rung out with indignation against me, and what names you and I have been called.

Well, I have not yet fired a shot in my own defence. Not one. I have replied to no attack, to no calumny. I have had too much else to do. In comparison with the idea that I endeavor to set forth, I am nothing, and may go to the ground, so that the truth goes on.

When I first came to stand in this place, many of my Unitarian brethren of the city, and elsewhere, complained publicly and privately, that they were held responsible for my theological opinions, which they did not share; and that

they had no opportunity to place themselves right before the public. To give them an opportunity and occasion for developing the theological antithesis betwixt their doctrines and my own, and to let the public see in what things they all agreed, and in what they unitedly differed from me, I published "a Letter to the Boston Association of Congregational Ministers, touching certain Matters of their Theology." But, alas! they have not answered the letter, nor informed the public of the things in which they all agree with each other, and wherein they all differ from me.

Men predicted our defeat. I believe, six months was the longest space allotted to us to live and repent. That was the extent of our "mortal probation." We ought not to think harshly of men for this. I suppose they did the best they could with their light. But we went on, and continued to live. It is a little curious to notice the reasons that were assigned, by the press and the pulpit, for the audience that came together. For the first six months, I took pains to collect the opinions of the theological press and pulpit. I would say, that, with that exception, I have seldom read the various denunciations which have been written against you and me, and which have been sent, I hope with the best intentions, from all parts of the United States. When I have received them, and seen their character from a line or two, — and the postage was seldom paid,* — I have immediately put them in the safest of all places, — committed them to the flames. But, for this period of six months, during which our ecclesiastical existence was likely to continue, I inquired what the opinions of the press and pulpit were.

The first reason assigned for the audience coming together was this: They came from vain curiosity, having itching ears to hear "what this babbler sayeth."

* Here I must make one exception. Abusive letters from South Carolina have been uniformly post-paid.

Then it was said men came here because I taught utter irreligion, blank immorality; that I had no love of God, no fear of God, no love of man; and that you thought, if you could get rid of your conscience and soul, and trample immortality under foot, and were satisfied there was no God, you should have a very nice time of it here and hereafter. Men read history very poorly. It is not men who falsify the word of God that are ever popular with the great mass of men. Never, never! Not so. The strictest, hardest preacher draws crowds of men together, when he speaks in the name of religion and God's higher law; but eloquent Voltaire gets most of his admirers of scoffing among the cultivated, the refined, and the rich: Atheism is not democratic.

Then it was declared that I was a shrewd, practical man, perfectly "well posted up" in every thing that took place; knew how to make investments, and get very large returns: unluckily, it has not been for myself that this has been true. And it was said that I collected large-headed, practical men to hear me, and that you were a "boisterous assembly."

Then, that I was a learned man, and gave learned discourses on ecclesiastical history or political history,— things that have not been found very attractive in the churches hitherto.

Then again, that I was a philosopher, with a wise head, and taught men theological metaphysics; and so a large company of men seemed all at once smitten with a panic for metaphysics and abstract preaching. It was never so before.

Then it was reported that I was a witty man, and shot nicely feathered arrows very deftly into the mark; and that men came to attend the sharp-shooting of a wit.

Then there was an eighth thing,— that I was an eloquent man; and I remember certain diatribes against the folly of filling churches with eloquence.

Then again, it was charged against me that I was a philanthropist, and taught the love of men, but did not teach at all the love of God; and that men really loved to love one another, and so came.

Then it was thought that I was a sentimentalist, and tickled the ears of "weak women," who came to delight themselves, and be filled full of poetry and love.

The real thing they did not seem to hit; that I preached an idea of God, of man, and of religion, which commended itself to the nature of mankind. From the churches in general, I expected little; but I have found much deep and real kindness from fellow-ministers of all denominations, — Unitarian, Universalist, Baptist, Methodist, Calvinist, and Christian. On the whole, — I am sorry to say it, — I have had less friendship shown me by the Unitarian sect in America, all things considered, than by the other sects. The heartiest abuse has come from my own brethren, and the stingiest testimonials for any merit. That was to be expected. I was a Unitarian; that is, I utterly rejected the Trinitarian theology: I associated chiefly with Unitarian clergymen. When my theological opinions became known to the public, some twelve years ago, they were declared "unsafe" and "dangerous" by the stricter sects. So an outcry was raised, not only against me, but also against the Unitarian sect. In self-defence, many Unitarian ministers, who had long been accused of being "hag-ridden by the orthodox," turned round, and denounced both my opinions and me, sometimes in the bitterest and most cruel fashion. They said, "He must be put down." They sought to "silence" me, to exclude me from the journals and the pulpits of the sect, to dissuade lyceum-committees from asking me to lecture, and to prevent my speaking in Boston. Nay, some took pains to prevent my parishioners at West Roxbury from attending service there; they tried to hinder booksellers from publishing my works; and I could

not find a publisher to put his name to the title-page of the first edition of my "Discourse of the Transient and Permanent in Christianity," — the Swedenborgian printers generously volunteered their name! The commonest courtesies of life were carefully withheld. I was treated like a leprous Jew. Studious attempts at deliberate insult were frequently made by Unitarian clergymen. I soon found, that, if theological Odium had been legally deprived of the arrows in its ancient quiver, it had yet lost none of the old venom from its heart. The Unitarians denied the great principle they had so manfully contended for, — free spiritual individuality in religion. I must say, I think they made a mistake. As a measure, their conduct was inexpedient; as a principle, it was false and wrong; as priestcraft, it was impolitic; as ethics, it was wicked: they hurt their own hand in breaking the Golden Rule over my head. But there were some very honorable exceptions in the denomination; men who lost sectarian favor by adhering to a universal principle of morals; and let me say, that I think no sect in Christendom would, in such a case, have treated a "heretic" with so little harshness as the Unitarians have shown to me. They have at least the tradition of liberality, which no other sect possesses. In England they have met my opinions with philosophical fairness, if not with partiality, and treated me with more consideration and esteem than I ever ventured to claim for myself.

All over the land I have found kindly and warm-hearted men and women, who have shed their dew-drop of sympathy upon me, just when my flower hung its head and collapsed, and seemed ready to perish. There is one clergyman to whom I owe an especial obligation. He has often stood in this place, and, for conscience' sake, has made greater and more difficult sacrifices than I. He began as an evangelist to the poor of Boston; carrying them the body's bread in his left hand, and Heaven's own manna in his

right; and he now sheds broader charity from the same noble and generous heart. "A friend in need is a friend indeed;" and, if his face were not before me at this moment, I should say what his modesty would be pained to hear; but it is what none of you need to be told.*

It is eight years since first we came together; and that is a long time in American history. America has gained four new States in that time; a territory bigger than the old thirteen; and got all the new country by wickedness. We have spread slavery anew over a country larger than the empire of France; have fought the Mexican war, so notorious for its wickedness. We have seen both political parties become the tools of slavery; the Democratic perhaps a little worse than the Whig. We have seen the Fugitive Slave Bill welcomed in Boston, a salute of one hundred guns fired to honor its passage; and a man kidnapped out of the birthplace of Samuel Adams, to the delight of the controlling men thereof! You and I have repeatedly trangressed the laws of the land, in order to hinder "Unitarian Christians" of Boston, supported by their clergy, from sending our fellow-worshippers into the most hideous slavery in the world!

Great men have died, — Jackson, Adams, Taylor, Calhoun, Clay, Webster. What changes have taken place in Europe in this brief eight years! The old Pope has died. The new Pope promised to be a philanthropist, and turned out what we now see. All of royalty, all of the king, "was carried out from Paris in a single street-cab;" and, a few days later, Napoleon the Little came in, furnished with nothing but "a tame eagle and a pocketful of debts." We have seen France rise up to the highest point of sublimity, and declare government to be founded on the

* If this sermon should fall into the hands of a stranger, he may be glad to know that I refer to the Rev. John T. Sargent.

unchanging law of God; and the same France, with scarcely the firing of a musket, drop down to the bottom of the ridiculous, and become the slave of the stupidest and vulgarest even of vulgar kings. We have seen all Western Europe convulsed with revolutions; the hope of political freedom brightening in men's hearts; and now see a heavier despotism as the present result of the defeated effort. Kossuth is an exile; and a ruined debauchee is the "imperial representative of morality" on the throne of Saint Louis.

I have been your minister almost eight years. Some of our members have withdrawn, and walk no more with us. I trust they were true to their conscience, and went where wiser and abler and better men can feed their souls as I cannot. I have never thought it a religious duty for any man to listen to my poor words; how poor nobody knows so well as I.

In myself there are many things which I lament. It has been a great grief to me, as I have looked upon your faces, that I was no worthier to speak to you; that I had not a larger intellectual power, by birth and culture, to honor the ideas withal; and, still more, that, in conscience and heart and soul, I was so poor.

One thing in my ministry has troubled me a good deal. Coming from a little country parish, with the habits of a country minister; knowing every man, woman, and child therein; knowing the thoughts of all that had any thoughts, and the doubts of such as had strength to raise a doubt,— I have found it painful to preach to men whom I did not know in the intimacy of private life. For the future, I hope it will be possible for me to know you better, and more intimately in your homes.

I must have committed many errors. When an old man, I trust I shall see them, and sometime point them

out, that others may be warned by my follies. You must know my character better than I know it. My private actions I know best; but you see me in joy and sorrow, in indignation and penitence, in sermon and in prayer, when there is no concealment in a man's face. Hold a medal, worn smooth, before the fire, and the old stamp comes out as before. Concealment lifts her veil before any strong emotion which renews the face. You must know me better than I know myself. I also know you. I have tasted your kindness in public and private; not only from women, — who have always shown the readiest sympathy for a new religious development, from the time when Pharaoh's daughter drew a slave's child out of the Nile, to that day when a woman poured the box of ointment over the head of Jesus, — but also from men; not only from young men, but from those whose heads have blossomed anew with the venerable flowers of age.

You, my friends, have been patient with my weaknesses, kind and affectionate. I think no man ever had truer, warmer, or more loving friends. As I have looked round on your faces, before the commencement of service; as I have sat and seen the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the joyous and the sad, come together; as I have gathered up the outward elements of my morning prayer from the various faces and dissimilar histories, which, at a single glance, stood before me, — my friends, I have thanked my God it was my lot to stand here; and yet have reproached myself again and again, that I was no worthier of the trust, and have asked before God, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

I know how often I must have wounded your feelings, in speaking of the political conduct of America; for I have endeavored to honor what was right, and expose to censure what was wrong, in both parties, and in the third party during its existence. I have not passed over the sins of

trade. I have preached on all the exciting and agitating topics of the day. I wonder not that some friends were offended. I only wonder that such a multitude has still continued to listen. Verily, there is little to attract you in these surroundings: public opinion pronounced it infamous to be here. It was the Ideas of Absolute Religion that drew you here through ill report. The highest and the best things I have had to offer, have always found the warmest welcome in your heart.

We must bid farewell to these old walls. They have not been very comfortable. All the elements have been hostile. The winter's cold has chilled us; the summer's heat has burned us; the air has often been poisoned with contaminations, a whole week long in collecting; and the element of earth, the dirt, that was everywhere. As I have stood here, I have often seen the spangles of opera-dancers, who beguiled the time the night before, lying on the floor beside me; and have picked them up in imagination, and woven them into my sermon and psalm and prayer. The associations commonly connected with this hall have not been of the most agreeable character. Dancing monkeys, and "Ethiopian Serenaders" making vulgar merriment out of the ignorance and the wretchedness of the American slave, have occupied this spot during the week, and left their marks, their instruments, and their breath, behind them on the Sunday. Could we complain of such things? I have thought we were very well provided for, and have given God thanks for these old, but spacious walls. The early Christians worshipped in caverns of the ground. In the tombs of dead men did the only live religion find its dwelling-place at Rome. The star of Christianity "first stood still over a stable"! These old walls will always be dear and sacred to me. Even the weather-stains thereon are to me more sacred than the pictures which the genius of Angelo painted in the Sistine Chapel, or those with which Raphael adorned

the Vatican. To me they are associated with some of the holiest aspirations and devoutest hours of my mortal life, and with the faces which welcomed every noble word I ever learned to speak.

Well, we must bid them farewell. Yonder clock will no more remind me how long I have trespassed on your patience, when your faces tell no such tale. We will bid these old walls, these dusty lights, farewell. Our old companion, the organ, has gone before us; and again shall we hear its voice.

But what have I been to you in all this time? You have lent me your ears: I have taken your hearts too, I believe. But let me ask this of you: Have I done you good, or have I done you harm? Have I taught you, and helped you, to reverence God the more; to have a firmer and heartier faith in Him; to love Him the deeper, and keep his laws the better; to love man the more? If so, then indeed has my work been blessed, and I have been a minister to you. But, if it has not been so; if your reverence and faith in God grow cold under my preaching, and your zeal for man dwindles and passes away, — then turn off from me, and leave me to the cold gilding and empty magnificence of our new place of worship; and go you and seek some other, who, with a loftier aspiring mind, shall point upwards towards God, and, with a holier heart, shall bid you love Him. But, above all things, let me entreat you that no reverence for me shall ever blind your eyes to any fault of mine, to any error of doctrine. If there are sins in my life, copy them not. Remember them at first, drop the tear of charity on them, and blot them out.

SERMON II.

OF THE POSITION AND DUTY OF A MINISTER.

2 Timothy i. 12. — "I know whom I have believed."

In the development of mankind, all the great desires get some instrument to help achieve their end — a machine for the private hand, an institution for the mind and conscience, the heart and soul, of millions of men. Thus all the great desires, great duties, great rights, become organized in human history; provided with some instrument to reach out and achieve their end. This is true of the finite desires; true also of the infinite.

Man would be fed and clothed: behold the tools of agriculture and the arts, — the plough and the factory. He would be housed and comforted: behold the hamlet and the town. Man and maid would love one another: see the home and the family, — the instrument of their love. Thousands want mutual succor: there is society, with its neighborly charities, and duties every day. Millions of men ask defence, guidance, unity of action: behold the state, with its constitutions and its laws, its officers and all its array of political means. These are finite; a lengthening of the arm, a widening of the understanding; tools for the affections and the heart. Thereby I lay hold of

matter and lay hold of man, and get the uses of the material world and of my brother-men.

These are finite, for to-day. But the same rule applies to the infinite desires. Man would orient himself before his God; and hence, alongside of the field and the factory, in the midst of the hamlet and the town, beside the State House and the Market House, there rises up the Church, its finger pointing to the sky. This is to represent to man the infinite desire, infinite duty, infinite right. Thereby mankind would avail itself of the forces of God, and be at home in His world. Man is so much body, that the mouth goes always: he never forgets to build and plant. But the body is so full of soul, that no generation ever loses sight of God. In this ship of the body, cruising oft in many an unholy enterprise, standing off and standing on, tacking and veering with the shifting wind of circumstance and time, there is yet a little needle that points up, which has its dip and variations;

> "But, though it trembles as it lowly lies,
> Points to the light that changes not, in heaven."

Man must have his institution for the divine side of him, and hence comes the church. Man has a priest before he has a king; and the progress in his idea of priest marks the continual advance of the human race.

The minister is to serve the infinite duties of man, minister to his infinite rights; and is to betake himself to the work of religion, as the farmer to agriculture, the housewright to building. But his function will depend on his idea of religion, of what religion is; that on his idea of God, of what God is.

Now, in all the great historical forms of religion, both before and after Christ, priest and people have regarded God as imperfect in power, in wisdom, in justice, in love, or in holiness; as a finite God, and often with a dark

background of evil to Him. Therefore, while they have worshipped before the Father, they have trembled before the devil, and deemed the devil mightier than God. Hence religion has been thought the service of an imperfect God, and of course a service with only a part of the faculties of man; those faculties not in their perfect action, but in their partial development and play.

Thus the function of the minister has been a very different thing in different ages of mankind. Let me sum up all these in three great forms.

I. First, the priest was to appease the Wrath of God. He was to stand between offended God and offending man, to propitiate God and appease Him, to make Him humane. The priest was a special mediator between God on the one side, and man on the other; and it was taught that God would not listen to Silas and Daniel: He would hear the word of Abner. So Abner must propitiate the Deity for Silas and Daniel.

The priest attempts this, first, by sacrifice, which the offending offers to the Offended; and the sacrifice is an atonement, a peace-offering, a bribe to God to buy off his anger. Next, he attempts it by prayers, which, it is thought, alter the mind of God and his purpose; for the priest is supposed to be more humane than the God who made humanity. But God, it is thought, will not hear the prayer of the profane people, nor accept their sacrifice; only that of the sacred priest.

This, then, was the function of the Heathen and Hebrew priest for a long time. Without sacrifice by the priest's hand, there was no salvation. That was the rule. "Come not empty-handed before the Lord," says the priest, "else He will turn you off." Then, the offering of sacrifice was thought to be religion, and the priest's function was to offer it. That is the rudest form.

II. Next, the function of the priest is to reconcile the offended God to offending men by ritual action, and then to communicate Salvation to Men by outward Means, — baptism, penitence, communion, absolution, extreme unction, and the like. Here the priest is no longer merely a sacrificer: he is a communicator of salvation already achieved. He does not make a new deposit of salvation, but only draws on the established fund. That is the chief function of the Catholic priest at this day. But still, like the Hebrew and Heathen priests, he makes "intercession with God" for the living and the dead. "Out of the range of the sacraments of the church," says he, "there is no salvation: the wrath of God will eat you up." The Catholic priest does not make a new and original sacrifice; for the one great sacrifice has been made once for all, and God has been appeased towards mankind in general. But the priest is to take this great sacrifice, and therewith redeem this and the other particular man; communicating to individuals the general salvation which Christ has wrought. With the Catholic, therefore, to take the sacraments is thought to be religion, and the great thing of religion.

III. Then, as a third thing, the priest aims to communicate and explain a Miraculous Revelation of the Will of God; and the worshippers are to believe that miraculous revelation of the will of God, and have faith in it. That is the only means of salvation with them. So, in this third form, to take the Scriptures and believe them is thought to be religion. This is the chief official function of the Protestant priest, — to communicate and explain the Scriptures; and all the theological seminaries in the Protestant world for the education of clergymen are established chiefly for that function, — to teach the young man to communicate and explain the Scriptures to mankind; for the belief in them is thought to be religion. Chillingworth, two hundred

years ago, said, "The Bible is the religion of Protestants;" and meant, To believe the Bible is the religion of Protestants. And that is what is meant by salvation by faith.

The line of historical continuity is never broke. The Catholic priest, like the Hebrew and the Heathen, still claims to alter the mind of God by "intercession." The Protestant priest, like the Catholic, still claims to communicate salvation by the "sacraments," in the waters of baptism, or the bread and wine of communion; and to change the purposes of God, by prayer for rain in time of drought, for health in time of pestilence. However, the chief function of the Protestant priest is to communicate and explain the Scriptures; for he says, "Out of the range of belief in Scripture there is no salvation."

Say the Heathen and Hebrew priests, "Offer the sacrifice, and be saved." Says the Catholic priest, "Accept the sacrament, and be saved." Says the Protestant priest, "Believe the Scriptures, and be saved." That has been, or still is, the official function of these three classes of ministers in sacred things. They represent the three successive ideas of religion which have appeared in the Heathen and Hebrew church, in the Catholic church, and lastly in the Protestant church.

But at this day, in all the forms of religion which belong to the two leading races of mankind, the Caucasian and the Mongolian, — comprising the Hebrew, Zoroastrian, Buddhist, Christian, and Mahometan, — the priest has got an exceptional function. That has come upon him by accident, as it were, in the progress of man, — a human accident, for there are no divine ones; God lets nothing slip unawares from his pen: there are no accidents in his world. And that function is, to promote religion; to promote plain piety and plain morality; to promote the love of God and the love of man.

This, I say, is exceptional. It is only a subsidiary part of the function, even of the Protestant minister. True, throughout all Christendom the priest demands righteousness. But mark this: He demands it as a measure convenient for present expediency, not as a principle necessary to eternal salvation. This exceptional function is more important with the Catholic than it was with the Heathen or Hebrew; more important with the Protestant than it is with the Catholic. Still, it is subsidiary; and it is thought that the sin of a whole life, however wicked, may be wiped out all at once, if, on his death-bed, a man repeats a few passages of Scripture, and declares his faith in the redemption of Christ, and a belief in the words of the Bible. A man so base as Aaron Burr — the most dreadful specimen of human depravity that America has yet produced, so far as I know — might have left an unblemished reputation for Christianity, if, a few weeks before he died, he had confessed his belief in every word between the lids of this Bible, had declared that he had no confidence in human virtue, hoped for salvation only through Christ, and if he had taken the communion at a priest's hand. That would have given him a better reputation in the churches than the noble career of Washington, and the long, philanthropic, and almost unspotted life of Franklin.

I say this is subsidiary. The Protestant priest does not rely on it as his main work; and, in proof of success, I have seldom known a minister point to the morality of his parish, — not a drunkard in it, not a licentious man, not a dishonest man, in it. I have seldom known him refer even to the comfort of his parish, — pauperism gone, all active, doing well, and well to do. He tells you of the number that he has admitted to the "Christian communion," of those that he has "sprinkled" with the waters of baptism; not the souls that he has baptized with the Holy Ghost and its beauteous fire. Men wish to prove that the Americans

are a "Christian people," a "religious people:" they tell the number of Bibles there are in the land; the number of churches that point their finger with such beauty to the sky; they never tell of the good deeds of the nation; of its institutions, of its ideas, its sentiments. And, when an outcry is made against the advance of "Infidelity," nobody quotes the three millions of slaves, the political corruption of the rulers, the venality of the courts, the disposition to plunder other nations; nobody speaks of intemperance and licentiousness, and dishonesty in trade: they only say that some man denies total depravity, or the fall, or the miracles, or the existence of a devil, and thinks he is "wiser than the Bible." Anywhere in Christendom it would be deemed a heresy against all Christendom to say that human nature was sufficient for human history, and had turned out on trial just as God meant it should turn out on trial; and that a man's salvation was his character, his heart, and his life.

If we start with the idea that God is infinitely perfect in power, in wisdom, in justice, and in love and holiness, — then the function of the minister is not to appease the wrath of God by sacrifice and intercession; not to communicate miraculous salvation, not even to communicate a miraculous revelation: it will be to promote absolute religion amongst mankind.

He will start with three facts: First, with the infinite perfection of the dear God; next, with human nature, which God made as a perfect means to his perfect end, — human nature developed thus far in its history; and, as a third thing, with the material universe, — the ground under our feet and the heavens over our head; and he will take the universe, the world of matter and the world of man, as the revelation of the infinite God.

Then, I say, the function of the minister will be to teach and promote the religion of human nature in all its parts. He will aim to teach, first, Natural Piety, the subjective service of God, the internal worship. I mean the love of God with mind and conscience and heart and soul; in the intellectual form, the love of every truth and every beauty; in the moral form, the love of justice; in the affectional form, the love of God as love; and the love of God also as holiness: to say it in a word, the love of the God of infinite wisdom, justice, love, and holiness, — the perfect God, the infinite Object, adequate to satisfy every spiritual desire of man.

Then he must aim to teach Natural Morality, the objective worship of God, which is the outward service. That is, the keeping of all the laws of the body and spirit of man; service by every limb of the body, every faculty of the spirit, and every power which we possess over matter or over men.

The minister is to show what this piety and morality demand, — in the form, first, of individual life; then in the form of domestic life; then of social, political, ecclesiastical, and general human life. He is to show how this religion will look in the person of a man, in a family, community, church, nation, and world. That is his function.

He is not to humanize God, but to humanize men; not to appease the wrath of God, — there is no such thing; not to communicate a mysterious salvation from an imaginary devil in another world; but, in this life, to help men get a real salvation from want, from ignorance, folly, impiety, immorality, oppression, and every form of sin. He is to teach man to save himself by his character and his life; not to lean on another arm. His function is not to communicate and explain a miraculous revelation. He knows revelation only by constant modes of operation; by law,

not against law; revelation in this universe of matter and in this greater universe of man, not revelation by miracle. What is the exceptional function of the Heathen, the Hebrew, the Catholic, and the Protestant priest, is the instantial and only function of the minister of the infinite God, who would teach the absolute religion.

Well, this minister must have regard to man in his nature as body and as spirit. Natural religion, — why, it is for this life as well as the life to come. It is but part of the function of religion to save me for the next world: I must be saved for this. He is to teach men to subordinate the body to the spirit, but to give the body its due; to subordinate the lower desires to the higher; all finite desires, duties, and rights, to the infinite desire, duty, and right; but to do this so that no one faculty shall tyrannize over any other, but that a man shall be the harmony which God meant him to be. He is to see to it that every one is faithful to his own individual character, and takes no man for master; everybody for teacher who can serve and teach; nobody for master barely to command. And, while he insists on individuality of life, he must also remember that the individual is for the family, that for the community, the community for the nation, and the nation for mankind; and that all of these must be harmoniously developed together. Thus the partiality of friendship, of connubial or parental love, the narrowness of the clan, neighborhood, or country, he is to correct by that universal philanthropy which takes in neighborhood, nation, and all mankind.

He is to remember, also, the immortal life of man, and to shed the light of eternity into man's consciousness, in the hour of passion, and in the more dangerous, long, cold, clear day of ambition. In the hour of distress and dreadful peril, he is to help men to that faith in God which gives stillness in every storm. He is to help them overcome this puerile fear of death, and to translate their fear of God into love

for Him, — into perfect, blameless, absolute trust in the Father; and he is to bring the light of all this beneficence upon men in the season of peril, and in the dreadful hour of mortal bereavement, when father and mother and child and wife gather blackness in the countenance, and pass away. Over the gate of death he is to arch the rainbow of everlasting life, and bid men walk through unabashed, and not ashamed. He is to promote the sentiment of religion, as a feeling of dependence on God, obligation to God, trust in God, and love for God; of ultimate dependence on His providence, unalienable obligation to keep His law, absolute trust in His protection, and a perfect and complete faith in His infinite perfection.

Then he is to promote the practice of this religion, so that what at first is an instinctive feeling shall be next a conscious idea of this ultimate dependence, unalienable obligation, absolute trust, and perfect and complete love; he is to promote the application of this consciousness of religion to all the departments of human life, — individual, domestic, social, national, and universal. Of all doctrines he is to ask, Are they true? of all statutes, Are they just? of all conduct, Is it manly, loving, and kind? of all things, — institutions, thoughts, and persons, Are they conformable to the nature of mankind, and to the will of God? So his aim must be to make all men perfect men; to do this first to his own little congregation, and next to all mankind.

Now, this cannot be done abstractly. Man is a body as well as a spirit. In a material world, by means of material things, must he work out his spiritual problems. The soul is a soul in the flesh, and the eternal duties of life bear hard on the transient interests of to-day.

Man's character is always the result of two forces, — the immortal spirit within him, and the transient circumstances about him. The minister is to know, that nine persons out of ten have their character much influenced by the cir-

cumstances about them; and he is to see to it that those circumstances are good. Thus, the abstract work of promoting religion, and helping to form the character of the people, brings the minister into contact with the material forces of the world.

It is idle to say the minister must not meddle with practical things. If the sun is to shine in heaven, it must shine into the street, and the shop, and the cellar; it must burnish with lovely light a filing of gold in the jeweller's shop, and it must illuminate the straggling straw in a farmer's yard. And just so religion, which communes with God with one hand, must lay the other on every human relation. So you see the relation which the minister must sustain to the great works of man, to political and commercial activity, to literature, and to society in general.

The State is a machine to work for the advantage of a special nation, for its material welfare alone, by means of certain restricted sentiments and ideas limited to that work, written in a Constitution, which is the norm of the statutes; by means of statute-laws, which are the norm of domestic and social conduct. So the Legislature makes statutes for the material welfare of the majority of that nation; the Judiciary decides that the statutes conform to the Constitution; the Executive enforces the statutes, and the people obey. When the State has done this, it has done every thing which its idea demands of it at the present day.

Now, the minister is to represent, not America, not England, not France alone, but the human nature of all mankind; and see that his nation harms no other nation; that the majority hinders no minority, however small; that it brings the weight of its foot upon no single man, however little. He must see that the material comfort of to-day is not got at the cost of man's spiritual welfare for to-day,

to-morrow, and eternity. So he is to try every statute of men by the law of God; the Constitution of America by the Constitution of the universe. National measures he must try by universal principles; and if a measure does not square with the abstract true and the abstract right, does not conform to the will and the law of God, — then he must cry out, "Away with it!" Statesmen look at political economy; and they ask of each measure, "Will it pay, here and now?" The minister must look for political morality, and ask, "Is it right in the eyes of God?" So you see that at once the pulpit becomes a very near neighbour to the state-house; and the minister must have an eye to correct and guide the politicians. He must warn men to keep laws that are just, warn them to break laws that are wicked; and, as they reverence the dear God, never to bow before an idol of statesmen or the State.

Then he must have an eye to the business of the nation; and, while the trader asks only, "What merchandise can we make?" the minister must also ask, "What men shall we become?" Both the politician and the merchant are wont to use men as mere tools, for the purposes of politics and trade, heedless of what comes, by such conduct, to their human instruments. The minister is to see to it, that man is never subordinated to money, morality never put beneath expediency, nor eternity sacrificed to to-day. The slave-trade was once exceedingly profitable to Newport and Liverpool, and was most eminently "respectable." But the minister is to ask for its effects on men; the men that traffic, and the trafficked men. Once it was as disreputable in a certain church in this city to preach against slave-buying in Guinea and slave-selling in Cuba, as it is now to preach against slave-taking in Boston or New Orleans. The spirit of modern commerce is sometimes as hostile to the higher welfare of the people as the

spirit of ancient war: both Old and New England have abundantly proved this in the present century.

The minister is to look also at the character of Literature; to warn men of the bad, and guide them to the good. At this day the power of the press is exceedingly great for good or for evil. In America, thank God, it is a free press; and no wicked censor lays his hand on any writer's page. See what a great expansion the press has got. What was a private thought one night in a senator's heart, is the next day a printed page, spread before the eyes of a million men. The press is an irresponsible power, and needs all the more to be looked after; and who is there to look after it, if not the minister that reverences the great God?

Then the minister is to study nicely the General Conduct of society, and seek to guide men from mere desire to the solemn counsels of duty; to check the redundance of appetite in the period of passion, and the redundance of ambition in the more dangerous period of calculation; to guard men against sudden gusts of popular frenzy.

The great concerns of Education come also beneath the minister's eye; and, while the press, business, and politics keep the lower understanding intensely active and excessively developed, he is to guide men to the culture of reason, imagination, conscience, the affections, and the soul; is to show them a truth that is far above the Forum and the Market's din; is to lead them to justice and to love, and to enchant their eyes with the beauty of the infinite God. The minister of absolute religion must be the schoolmaster for the loftier intellect and the conscience; the teacher of a philanthropy that knows no distinction of color or of race; the teacher of a faith in God which never shrinks from obedience to his law.

In society, as yet, there is still a large mass of Heathenism, — I mean of scorn for that which is spiritual in the body, and immortal in the soul; I mean a contempt for the feeble, hatred for the unpopular transgressor, a contempt for justice, a truckling to expediency, and a cringing to men of large understanding and colossal wickedness. Hence, in the nation there is a perishing class three and thirty hundred thousand strong, held as slaves. In all our great cities, there is another perishing class, goaded by poverty, oppressed by crime. The minister is to be an especial guardian and benefactor of the neglected, the oppressed, the poor; eyes to the ignorant, and conscience and self-respect to the criminal. He is not to represent merely the gallows and the jail: he is to represent the spirit of the man who "came to save that which was lost," and the infinite goodness of God, who sends this sunlight on you and me, as well as on better men.

Then, in all our great cities, there is one deep and dark and ghastly pit of corruption, whereinto, from all New England's hills, there flows down what was once as fair and as pure and as virgin fresh as the breath of maiden morn. It is the standing monument which shows the actual position of woman in modern society; that men regard her as the vehicle of their comfort and the instrument of their lust, — not a person, only a thing! The minister, remembering who it was that drew Moses out of the river Nile, and who washed the feet of one greater than Moses with her own tears, and wiped them with her hair, must not forget this crime, its consequences, which contaminate society, and its cause afar off, — contempt and scorn for woman: that is its cause.

In all this, you see how different is the position and function of the minister of absolute religion from that of the

mere priest. In Russia, the few hold down the many, and the priest says nothing against it. He is there only to appease God, to administer salvation, to communicate Scripture; not to teach morality and piety. In America, the many hold down the few, — the twenty millions chain the three; and the priest says nothing against it. What does he care? He goes on appeasing the wrath of God, administering salvation, explaining and communicating Scripture, and turns round and says: "This is all just as it should be, a part of the revelation, salvation, and sacraments too; come unto me, and believe, and be baptized with water." But the minister of absolute religion is to hold a different talk. He is to say: "My brethren, hold there! Stop your appeasing of God! — wait till God is angry. Stop your imputing of righteousness! There is no salvation in that. Stop your outcry of 'Believe, believe, believe!' Turn round, and put an end to this hateful oppression, and tread it under your feet; and then come before your God with clean hands, and offer your gift. That is your sacrifice."

Warlike David plunders Uriah of the one lamb that lay all night in his bosom; then slays the injured man with the sword of the children of Ammon. The priest knows it all, and says against it not a single word; but he slays his bullocks, and offers his goats and his turtle-doves, and makes his sacrifices, and spreads out his hands and says, "Save us, good Lord! David is a man after the Lord's own heart." No word touches the heart of the king under his royal robe. But there comes forth a plain man, not a priest, nay, a prophet: he points the finger, with his "Thou art the man!" and the penitent king lies prostrate and weeping in the dust.

A man of great intellect leads off the people: city by city they go over. All the priests cry out, "Let us do as we list." "There is no Higher Law!" "I will send back

my own brother." Then it is for the minister to speak, — words tender if he can, but, at all events, words that are true, words that are just.

Just now the American Esau is hungry again. The Cuban pottage is savory. "Feed me," cries he; "for I am faint." "Eat, O Esau!" says the tempter, "rough and hairy, and tired with hunting gold in California, and negroes in New England. Eat of this, O American Esau! and be glad. There is no God!" But the minister is to say: "American Esau, wilt thou sell thy birthright of unalienable justice? Thou sell that! Dost not thou remember the Eye which never slumbers nor sleeps?"

This, my friends, is the function of the minister. Well, has he Means adequate to his work? They are only his gifts by nature, and his subsequent attainments; his power of wisdom and justice, his power of love, and his power of religion; that is all; nothing more than that, with his power of speech to bring it to the heart of men. But he has for ally the human nature which is in all men, which loves the true and the just, loves man and loves God. He has all the forces of the universe to help him just so far as he is on the side of truth and right; for all history is only a large showing, that "the way of the transgressor is hard;" and "the path of the righteous shineth more and more unto the perfect day." There are the august faces of noble men, who made the world loftier by their holiness, their philanthropy, and their faith in God. There are the prophets and apostles; that Moses whom a woman drew out from the waters; this greater than Moses, whose feet a penitent sinner washed with her tears. There are the blessed words in this book, fragrant all over with beauty and with trust in God. There are the words in every wise book. And, if the minister is strong enough, the ground under his feet is his ally; and the heavens over his head, — they also are his

help; they both shall mingle in his sermon, as these flowers at my side mingle their beauty in this cup.

Then there are living men and women about him ready to help. Some of them will teach him new piety and new morality. There are great teachers thereof abroad in the world at this day; there are others equally far-sighted in the stillness of many a home. Helpers for a religious work — they are everywhere. Soon as the trumpet gives a not uncertain sound, they set themselves in order, and are ready for the battle. The noblest men of the times come round to the side of truth and right; and, when the hands of Moses hang heavy, men and women hold them up, till the sun goes down, and the sky flames with victory.

The minister has a most excellent position. It is so partly by old custom. Rest on Sunday, and the institution of preaching, are two habits exceedingly needful at this day, and of great advantage, if wisely used. But his position is great also by its nature; for the minister is to preach on themes most concerning to all, — on the conduct of life, its final destination; is to appeal to what is deepest, dearest, truest, and what is divinest too, in mortal or immortal man.

The most cultivated class care little for piety; but, with the mass of men, religion has always been a matter the most concerning of all their concerns. So no earnest man ever spoke in vain. John the Baptist, Jesus of Nazareth, peasant Luther, hardy Latimer, courtly Fenelon, and accomplished Bossuet, when they speak, draw crowds from earth, and the humblest sinner looks up and aspires towards God. Men in our day forget the power of the pulpit, they see so few examples thereof. They know that bodily force is power; that money, office, a place in the Senate, is power; they forget that the pulpit is power; that truth, justice, and love, are power; that knowledge of God and faith in Him are the most powerful of all powers.

The churches decline. All over New England they decline. They cannot draw the rich, nor drive the poor, as once they did of old. Why is it so? They have an idea which is behind the age; a theology that did very well for the seventeenth century, but is feeble in the nineteenth. Their science is not good science; you must take it on faith, not knowledge: it does not represent a fact. Their history is not good history: it does not represent man, but old dreams of miracles. They have an idea of God which is not adequate to the purposes of science or philanthropy, and yet more valueless for the purposes of piety. Hence men of science turn off with contempt from the God of the popular theology; the philanthropists can only loathe a Deity who dooms mankind to torture. And will you ask deeply pious men to love the popular idea of God? Here are in Boston a hundred ministers: you would hardly know it except by the calendar. Many of them are good, kind, well-conducted, well-mannered men, with rather less than the average of selfishness, and rather more than the average of charity. But how little do they bring to pass? Drunkenness reels through all the streets, and shakes their pulpit: the Bible rocks; but they have nothing to say, though it rock over. The kidnapper seizes his prey, and they have excuses for the stealer of men, but cannot put up a prayer for his victim; nay, would drive the fugitive from their own door. What is the reason? Blame them not. They are ordained to appease the wrath of God, to administer salvation in wine or water, to communicate and explain a miraculous revelation. They do not think that religion is piety and morality: it is belief in the Scriptures; compliance with the ritual. This is the cause which paralyzes the churches of New England and all the North. The clergy are better than their creed. But who can work well with a poor tool?

Well, my friends, it is to this pulpit that I have come. This is my function, such are my means. There was never such a time for preaching as this nineteenth century, — so full of vigor, enterprise, activity; so full of hardy-headed men. There was never such a time to speak in, such a people to speak to. In no country could I have so fair "a chance to be heard" as you have given me.

There is nothing between me and my God; only my folly, my prejudice, my pride, my passion, and my sin. I may get all of truth, of justice, of love, of faith in God, which the dear Father has treasured up for eternity, age after age. "Fear not, my son," says the Father: "thou shalt have whatsoever thou canst take." And there is nothing betwixt me and the twenty-three millions of America, or the two hundred and sixty millions of Christendom; nothing but my cowardice, my folly, my selfishness, and my sin; my poverty of spirit, and my poverty of speech. I am free to speak, you are free to hear; to gather the good into vessels, and cast the bad away. If old churches do not suit us, there is all the continent to build new ones on, all the firmament to build into. A good word flies swift and far. There is attraction for it in human hearts. Truth, justice, religion, and humanity, — how we all love them! Every day gives witness how dear they are to the hungry heart of man. Able men make a wicked statute, wicked judges violate the Constitution, and defile the great charter of human liberty with ungodly hoofs; but very seldom can they get the statute executed. "Keep it," says the priest: "there is no Higher Law!" The preaching comes to nothing; but a modest woman writes a little book — a great book: pardon me for calling it a little book — showing the wickedness of the law which men aim to enforce, and in thrice three months there are four hundred thousand copies of it in the bosom of the American and the

British England; and it has become a flame in the heart of Christendom, that will not pass away.

Tell me of the foolishness of preaching! I have no confidence in foolish preaching; but I have an unbounded confidence in wise preaching, — in preaching truth, justice, holiness, and love; in preaching natural piety and natural morality. Only let the minister have a true idea of God such as men need, and of religion such as we want, and there was never such a time for preaching, for religious power. Let me pray the people's prayer of righteousness, of faith in man, in God; and I have no fear that the devil shall execute his "Lower Law."

There was never such a nation to preach to. Look at the vigor of America; only in her third century yet, and there are three and twenty millions of us in the family, and such a homestead as never lay out of doors before. Look at her riches, — her corn, cattle, houses, shops, factories, ships, towns; her freedom here at the North, — at the South it is not America: it is Turkey in Asia moved over. Look at the schools, colleges, libraries, lyceums. The world never saw such a population; so rich, vigorous, well-educated, so fearless, so free, and yet so young. I know America very well. I know her faults: I have never spared them, nor never will. I have great faith in America; in the American idea; in the ideal of our government, — a government of all the people, by all the people, for all the people; a government to serve the unalienable rights of man; government according to the law of God, and His constitution of the universe. To the power of numbers, of money, of industry, and invention, I will ask the nation to add the power of justice, of love, of faith in God and in the natural law of God. Then we might surpass the other nations, not only in vulgar numbers and vulgar gold, but in righteousness, which the good God asks of us. I have confidence in America. I do not believe that Ameri-

can Democracy is always to be Satanic, and never celestial. I do not believe in the Democracy that swears and swaggers, that invades Mexico and Cuba, and mocks at every "Higher Law" which is above the passions of the mob. I know America better. The Democracy of the New Testament, of the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive as we forgive;" the Democracy of the Beatitudes, — that shall one day be a "kingdom come." I have confidence in America, because I have confidence in man and confidence in God; for He knew what He did when He made the world, and made human nature sufficient for human history and its own salvation.

I say I have great faith in preaching; faith that a religious sentiment, a religious idea, will revolutionize the world to beauty, holiness, peace, and love. Pardon me, my friends, if I say I have faith in my own preaching; faith that even I shall not speak in vain. You have taught me that. You have taught me to have a good deal of faith in my own preaching; for it is your love of the idea which I have set before you, that has brought you together week after week, and now it has come to be year after year, in the midst of evil report — it was never good report. It was not your love for me: I am glad it was not. It was your love for my idea of man, of God, and of religion. I have faith in preaching, and you have given me reason to have that faith.

I well know the difficulty in the way of the religious development of America, of New England, of Boston. Look around, and see what blocks the wheels forward; how strong unrighteousness appears; how old it is, how ancient and honorable. But I am too old to be scared. I have seen too much ever to despair. The history of the world, — why, it is the story of the perpetual triumph of truth over error, of justice over wrong, of love against hate, of faith in God victorious over every thing which resists his

law. Is there no lesson in the life of that dear and crucified one? Eighteen hundred years ago, his voice began to cry to us; and now it has got the ear of the world. Each Christian sect has some truth the others have not: all have earnest and holy-hearted men, sectarian in their creed, but catholic in character, waiting for the consolation, and seeking to be men.

I may have an easy life, — I should like it very well: a good reputation, — it would be quite delightful. I love the praise of men, — perhaps no man better. But I may have a hard life, a bad name in society, in the state, and a hateful name in all the churches of Christendom. My brothers and sisters, that is a very small thing to me, compared with the glorious gladness of telling men the whole truth, and the whole justice, and the whole love of religion. Before me pass the whirlwind of society, the earthquake of the state, and the fire of the church; but through the storm, and the earthquake's crash, and the hiss of the fire, there comes the still small voice of reason, of conscience, of love, and of faith; and that is the voice of God. Those things shall perish, but this shall endure when the heavens have faded, as these poor flowers shall vanish away.

I am astonished, my friends, that men come to hear me speak; not at all amazed at the evil name which attends me everywhere. I am much more astonished that you came, and still come, and will not believe such evil things. In the dark hall which we left but a week ago, which has now become a brilliant spot in my memory, all the elements were against us: here they are in our favor. Here is clear air in our mouths, here is beauty about us on every side. The sacrament is administered to our eyes: O God, that I could administer such a sacrament of beauty also to your ear, and through it to your heart!

Bear with me and pardon me when I say that I fear that, of the many persons whom curiosity has brought hither

to-day to behold the beauty of these walls, I cannot expect to gather more than a handful in my arms. Standing in this large expanse, with this crowd on every side, around and above me, I feel my weakness more than I have felt it ever before. If my word can reach a few earnest and holy hearts, and appear in their lives, then I thank my God that the word has come to me, and will try not to be faithless, but to be true.

I know my imperfections, my follies, my faults, my sins; how slenderly I am furnished for the functions I assume. You do not ask that I should preach to you of that. You would all rather that I should preach thereof to myself, when there is no presence but the Unslumbering Eye which searches the heart of man.

If you lend me your ears, I shall doubtless take your hearts too. That I may not lead you into any wrong, let me warn you of this. Never violate the sacredness of your individual self-respect. Be true to your own mind and conscience, your heart and your soul. So only can you be true to God.

You and I may perish. Temptation, which has been too strong for thousands of stronger men, may be too great for me; I may prove false to my own idea of religion and of duty; the gold of commerce may buy me, as it has bought richer men; the love of the praise of men may seduce me; or the fear of men may deter my coward voice, and I may be swept off in the earthquake, in the storm, or in the fire, and prove false to that still small voice. If it shall ever be so, still the great ideas which I have set forth, of man, of God, of religion, — they will endure, and one day will be "a flame in the heart of all mankind." To-day! why, my friends, eternity is all around to-day, and we can step but towards that. A truth of the mind, of the conscience, of the heart, or the soul, — it is the will of God; and the omnipotence of God is pledged for the achievement of that

will. Eternity is the life-time of Truth. As the forces of matter, of necessity, obey the laws of gravitation; so the forces of man must, consciously and by our volition, obey the infinite will of God. Out of this absolute religion, which I so dimly see, — and it is only the dimness of the beginning of twilight which I see, and which I dimly preach, — there shall rise up one day men with the intellect of an Aristotle and the heart of a Jesus, and with the beauty of life which belongs to man; there shall rise up full-grown and manly men, womanly women, attaining the loveliness of their estate; there shall be families, communities, and nations, ay, and a great world also, wherein the will of God is the law, and the children of God have come of age and taken possession. God's thought must be a human thing, and the religion of human nature get incarnated in men, families, communities, nations, and the world.

Can you and I do any thing for that? Each of us can take this great idea, and change it into daily life. That is the religion which God asks, the sacrament in which He communes, the sacrifice which He accepts.

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